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(PATENT)

CLAIMS

Claims 10 and 18 are amended, and claim 11 is canceled, by way of this response. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application. The pending claims are as follows:

1. (Previously presented) A method of routing calls to service agents by one or more network devices, comprising:
 - receiving an incoming call from a caller at a switching device;
 - routing the incoming call to a voice response device;
 - prompting the caller to provide audio input relating to the incoming call;
 - assigning a unique call identifier to the incoming call;
 - storing the audio input in a file associated with the unique call identifier;
 - transferring the incoming call from the voice response device back to the switching device;
 - storing the incoming call in a call queue within the switching device;
 - providing the audio input to an available service agent; and
 - connecting the caller to the available service agent after providing the audio input to the available service agent.
2. (Canceled)
3. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the prompting the caller includes:
 - requesting, by the voice response device, the caller to provide information relating to a reason for the incoming call.
- 4-5. (Canceled)
6. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1,
 - wherein a server communicates with the voice response device and the available service agent; and
 - wherein the providing the audio input includes:

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receiving, by the server, an identity of the available service agent to
receive the incoming call,
retrieving the audio input from the file using the unique call identifier,
and
sending the retrieved audio input to the available service agent.

7. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the providing the audio input includes:
obtaining additional information related to the incoming call, and
providing the additional information along with the audio input to the
available service agent.
8. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the providing the audio input includes:
sending the audio input to a data device associated with the available service
agent.
9. (Previously presented) A system for routing calls to service agents, comprising:
means for receiving calls from callers;
means for prompting the callers to provide audio input relating to the calls;
assigning a unique call identifier to the received call;
means for recording the audio input associated with the unique call identifier;
means for sending the calls to available ones of the service agents;
means for providing the audio input to the available service agents; and
means for connecting the callers to the available service agents after providing
the audio input to the available service agents.

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10. (Currently amended) A system for routing calls to service agents, comprising:
a switching device configured to receive an incoming call from a caller and to route the incoming call to a voice response device;
a the voice response device configured to receive the incoming call from the switching device, prompt the caller to provide audio input relating to the incoming call, record the audio input, and send the incoming call to the switching device for transmitting to an available one of the service agents; and
a server configured to associate the recorded audio input with the incoming call, receive identification of the available service agent from the switching device, and provide the recorded audio input to the available service agent.
11. (Canceled)
12. (Original) The system of claim 10, wherein the voice response device is configured to request the caller to provide information relating to a reason for the incoming call.
13. (Original) The system of claim 10, wherein the switching device is further configured to store the incoming call in a call queue and route the incoming call from the call queue to the available service agent.
14. (Original) The system of claim 10, wherein the server is configured to generate a unique call identifier for the incoming call; and
wherein the voice response device is configured to obtain the unique call identifier from the server and associate the unique call identifier with the recorded audio input.
15. (Original) The system of claim 14, wherein the server is further configured to retrieve the recorded audio input from the voice response device using the unique call identifier.
16. (Original) The system of claim 10, wherein the server is further configured to obtain additional information related to the incoming call and provide the additional information along with the recorded audio input to the available service agent.

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17. (Original) The system of claim 10, wherein the server is configured to interact with a data device associated with the available service agent to play the recorded audio input for the available service agent.
18. (Currently amended) A system for routing calls to service agents, comprising:
a switching device configured to receive an incoming call from a caller and to route the incoming call to a voice response device; and
a the voice response device configured to receive the incoming call from the switching device, prompt the caller to provide audio input relating to the incoming call, record the audio input, send the incoming call back to the switching device, initiate a call to an available one of the service agents, provide the recorded audio input to the available service agent when the available service agent answers the initiated call, and conference the incoming call and the initiated call to permit the available service agent to service the incoming call.
19. (Original) The system of claim 18, wherein the voice response device is further configured to send the initiated call to the switching device for transmission to the available service agent.
20. (Original) The system of claim 19, wherein the switching device is further configured to store the initiated call in a call queue and send the initiated call from the call queue to the available service agent.
21. (Original) The system of claim 18, wherein the voice response device is further configured to wait for an acknowledgement that indicates that the available service agent has heard the recorded audio input and bridge the incoming call and the initiated call in response to the acknowledgement.
22. (Original) The system of claim 18, wherein the switching device is further configured to drop a connection to the voice response device after the voice response device conferences the incoming call and the initiated call.

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23. (Previously presented) A system for routing calls to service agents, comprising:
a switching device configured to receive an incoming call from a caller; and
a voice response device configured to receive an incoming call from a caller,
prompt the caller to provide audio input relating to the incoming call, record the audio input,
initiate a call to an available one of the service agents, provide the recorded audio input to the
available service agent when the available service agent answers the initiated call, and
conference the incoming call and the initiated call to permit the available service agent to
service the incoming call;
wherein the switching device is further configured to receive the initiated call
from the voice response device, store the initiated call in a call queue, and send the initiated
call from the call queue to the available service agent.
24. (Original) The system of claim 23, wherein the voice response device is further
configured to wait for an acknowledgement that indicates that the available service agent has
heard the recorded audio input and bridge the incoming call and the initiated call in response
to the acknowledgement.
25. (Original) The system of claim 23, wherein the switching device is further
configured to drop a connection to the voice response device after the voice response device
conferences the incoming call and the initiated call.
26. (Original) The system of claim 23, wherein the voice response device is configured
to receive the incoming call over a public telephone network.
27. (Original) The system of claim 26, wherein the voice response device is configured
to send the initiated call to the switching device over the public telephone network.

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28. (Previously presented) A network device for routing calls to service agents, comprising:

a forwarding engine configured to receive an incoming call from a caller, prompt the caller to provide audio input relating to the incoming call, assigning a unique call identifier to the received call send the incoming call to an available one of the service agents, provide the audio input to the available service agent when the available service agent answers the incoming call, receive an acknowledgement indicating that the available service agent has heard the audio input, and connect the caller to the service agent in response to the acknowledgement; and

one or more audio detectors configured to record the audio input from the caller.

29. (Original) The system of claim 28, wherein the forwarding engine is further configured to store the incoming call in a call queue and send the incoming call from the call queue to the available service agent.

30. (Previously presented) A method for routing calls to service agents by one or more network devices, comprising:

receiving an incoming call from a caller;
prompting the caller to provide audio input relating to the incoming call;
assigning a unique call identifier to the received call;
recording the audio input associated with the unique call identifier;
initiating a call to an available one of the service agents;
providing the audio input to the available service agent when the service agent answers the initiated call; and
connecting the caller to the available service agent to permit the available service agent to service the incoming call.

31. (Original) The method of claim 30, wherein the initiating a call includes:
placing a conference call to the available service agent.

32. (Original) The method of claim 31, wherein the connecting the caller to the available service agent includes:

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bridging the initiated call and the incoming call together.

33. (Original) The method of claim 30, wherein the connecting the caller to the available service agent includes:

waiting for an acknowledgement that indicates that the available service agent has heard the audio input; and
bridging the initiated call and the incoming call in response to the acknowledgement.

34. (Previously presented) A method for routing calls to service agents by a network device, comprising:

receiving an incoming call from a caller;
prompting the caller to provide audio input relating to the incoming call;
assigning a unique call identifier to the received call;
recording the audio input associated with the unique call identifier;
sending the incoming call to an available one of the service agents;
providing the audio input to the available service agent when the service agent answers the incoming call; and
connecting the caller to the available service agent to permit the available service agent to service the incoming call.

35. (Original) The method of claim 34, wherein the connecting the caller to the available service agent includes:

waiting for an acknowledgement that indicates that the available service agent has heard the audio input; and
connecting the caller to the available service agent in response to the acknowledgement.